WEST GERMAN REARMAMENT

By C. G. D. ONSLOW

PROBABLY the most consistent feature of the policy of the three Western powers—the United States, Great Britain, and France—towards the defeated Germany, from the time of Potsdam until a few months ago, was the emphasis on the need for the disarmament and demilitarization of the Germany of the future; and when it was decided, in 1949, to establish the Federal Republic of Western Germany, this policy was endorsed once more.

In June 1949, the Foreign Ministers of the three powers met in Paris, and on the twentieth of that month the High Commission charter was signed. At a second meeting held early in November of the same year, also in Paris, it was agreed that certain wider powers should be granted to the Federal Republic through the High Commissioners. Nevertheless when, on November 22, the definitive Occupation Statute, sometimes known as the Petersberg agreement, came to be signed by Konrad Adenauer, Chancellor of the new Republic, and by the three High Commissioners at the Petersberg Hotel in Bonn, the headquarters of the High Commission, it contained the following significant clause:

> III. The Federal Government further declares its earnest determination to maintain the demilitarization of the Federal territory and to endeavor by all means in its power to prevent the re-creation of armed forces of any kind. To this end the Federal Government will co-operate fully with the High Commission in the work of the Military Security Board.

This would seem categorical enough; but at the same time it must be mentioned that the subject of German rearmament had begun to be actively debated in the press on both sides of the Atlantic. Although the only immediate outcome of these discussions was to be a reiteration of former policy on the part of the Western powers, they are nevertheless interesting, as

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

providing the first signs of a change in public opinion with regard to the arming of Germany.

The curiosity of the press seems originally to have been aroused by the second Paris meeting of the Foreign Ministers. It was stimulated by reports, mentioned in the *New York Times* of November 15 that "staff officers of a number of West European countries have been discussing the difference that the raising of even five German divisions would make to the defense of Europe, on the thesis, apparently, that without German divisions there just are not enough troops in the West to hold the Russians," and by reference to the changed situation that might arise were the Russians to withdraw their forces of occupation from East Germany. Secretary of State Dean Acheson, since his return from Paris, had frequently been asked at press conferences whether the question of German rearmament had been discussed at the Foreign Ministers' meeting, and as frequently he had denied that it had. On November 16, he repeated this denial and the following day President Truman confirmed it; but for some reason these statements do not appear to have been considered as specific or categorical. The *London Times* reported that "words like 'gendarmerie' and 'internal security' and phrases like 'forces adequate to hold the Rhine' were beginning to be heard" in the United States, although the "evasions" of the President and Mr. Acheson were regarded in Britain less as foreshadowing an early change in American policy than as reserving America's freedom of decision for the day when circumstances might have altered.

Meanwhile, various public figures contributed their private opinions on the question. In a speech at Boston, General Lucius D. Clay, former commander of the United States forces in Germany, suggested that a composite military force, to include German infantry, might be formed for the defense of Western Europe. In Paris, Senator Thomas of Oklahoma, in an interview with the correspondent of *Le Monde,* expressed his view that a German force was necessary for the defense of the West, and said that "several divisions of German troops should be armed by the United States without Germany herself being permitted to manufacture arms."

British and French opinion, however, remained hostile to

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

the idea. M. Teitgen, the French Minister of Information, stated that "it must be realized that France could not remain part of a security system that encompassed German rearmament." The French Assembly's defense debate at the end of November confirmed the view that Germany must remain excluded from the Atlantic Pact and that the reconstitution of an armed force on her territory must be forbidden. In the course of this debate, Foreign Minister Robert Schuman said that "to rearm Germany would be to invite conflicts for which the French government wished to assume neither risks nor responsibility." Many Frenchmen, indeed, seemed to be as uneasy at the prospect of an inadequately defended no-man's-land on their eastern flank as they were at the idea of a resuscitated German army. One deputy, M. Pierre Cot, went so far as to maintain that there were only two hypotheses—either the Germans must be enabled to defend themselves or they must be defended by the French; but in answer, M. Schuman made the assertion, significant in the light of later developments, that the present danger vis-à-vis Germany lay in the economic sphere and that the only solution to that danger was to be found in an economic organization on the European scale.

On the American side, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, arriving in Europe for the Paris meeting of the Atlantic Pact Defense Ministers, stated at Frankfurt: "President Truman has said that the United States has no intention to rearm Germany: that is official United States policy, with no hedging and no dodging." But the *New York Times* now pointed out that the following important question remained unanswered: "How," it asked, "does the United States expect to defend Western Europe, which now includes Berlin, against a minimum of 175 Russian divisions without drawing upon German manpower?"

At this point the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, allowed himself to be drawn into the discussion. Hitherto, virtually his only contribution had been a statement made on November 22 that "I do not want a German army." But on December 3, in an interview with a correspondent of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer,* he went on record with a pronouncement to the effect that "Germany should contribute to the de-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

fense of Europe in a European army under the command of a higher European headquarters."

This interview appears to have caused something of a sensation, and in the course of the next few days Dr. Adenauer was repeatedly called upon to explain precisely what he meant. This he attempted to do, at press conferences and at meetings of his party, particularly at the C.D.U. congress at Koenigswinter on December 9. The gist of these various statements may be summarized as follows. Dr. Adenauer emphasized that he remained fundamentally opposed to the rearmament of the German Republic: "I have always taken the view," he said, "that the security of West Germany was a matter for the occupying powers"; but the Allies must realize that Germany is not a desert but a thickly populated country and that it would be a fatal mistake to leave Germany defenseless against possible aggression from the East. In regard to the "people's army" being formed in East Germany, it was necessary to say to the Allies: "You cannot leave us without protection."

The Allies must ask themselves which was the greater danger—the threat from Russia or the possibility of a German contingent in a European army for the defense of Europe. If, he added, our people are forced to take a hand at some unforeseen time in the defense of Europe, then we could only do so on the basis of equal rights and within the framework of a European army: "I should be in favor, not of an independent *Wehrmacht,* but of a German contingent in such a European force; I should be opposed to Germans being accepted into, or recruited for, a non-German contingent, or to their serving as mercenaries."

The reception accorded to these explanations, both within Germany and without, was distinctly cold. The following week all parties of the *Bundestag* were unanimous in repudiating any idea of rearmament, while in allied circles Dr. Adenauer's temerity in continuing to discuss the subject after he had apparently been advised to steer clear of it seems to have earned him a rebuke from the High Commission. In other quarters the Chancellor was censured for resorting to "newspaper diplomacy," and it was felt that he had been profiting from the occasion to send up a few trial balloons. It was con-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

sidered regrettable that these statements, coming as they did so soon after the conclusion of the Petersberg agreement, might lead the latter to be regarded as merely another scrap of paper. But while there was a general feeling that Dr. Adenauer had been guilty of talking out of turn, a leading article in the *London Times* of December 19, though stressing the dangers of German rearmament, repeats that the question must nevertheless be considered against the background of Russian policy, for "while the best defense lies in political and economic reconstruction of Germany, the Russians, by forming the armed police force in East Germany, have been the first to begin the rearmament programme, and this alone will make some degree of rearmament in West Germany necessary before the Western Powers can leave." But although this article, and others appearing about the same time in papers such as the *New York Herald Tribune,* the London *Economist,* and *Le Monde,* all emphasized that the prospect was one that must be faced, there seemed to be a widespread reluctance in the ranks of the statesmen concerned to face it immediately, in public at least.

During the early months of 1950, in fact, the question of German rearmament seems to have fallen out of favor as a topic of popular discussion. Of the statements, however, one in particular, made by the United States High Commissioner, John J. McCloy, at Stuttgart shortly after his return from discussions in Washington with President Truman and Mr. Acheson, is worthy of note. Speaking in the hall where, three and a half years before, James Byrnes had pronounced the fundamentals of American policy towards Germany, Mr. McCloy used "firm words." He advised the Germans to do some "very straight thinking" and told them that there was nothing to be attained by political maneuvers. "Germany," he continued, "cannot be allowed to develop political conditions or a military status which would threaten other nations or the peace of the world. That means there will be no German army or air force. German security will best be protected by German participation in a closely knit Western European community." And, some six weeks later, in the course of a speech delivered in Berlin, Mr. McCloy further stated: "The task is to build

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

up a military organization at Fontainebleau, not in Germany."

Not everyone, however, was satisfied. During March, both Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden raised the question in the House of Commons; but when Mr. Churchill, during a debate on defense, expressed his belief that Europe could not be defended without the aid of Germany, he only succeeded in drawing from Prime Minister Clement Attlee the comment that it was a most difficult and thorny subject and that his (Mr. Churchill's) references to it were extremely irresponsible and injudicious. Again, towards the end of March, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, referring to the question of German rearmament, said, "We are all against it" and expressed his fear of "setting the clock back," emphasizing that it was of the greatest importance that Germany and France should somehow be brought together. Commenting on these statements, the *London Times* stressed the need to bring Germany into full contact with the rest of Western Europe, but not in such a way as to throw the whole off balance. The longer the formation of a German army could wait, the better; rearmament of Germany at once could only be risked if it meant an immediate increase of strength to the West, and only under cover of a stronger force than Europe now possessed.

For the rest, those newspaper correspondents who are still curious enough to ask questions on the "difficult and thorny" subject were rewarded by no new answers. At a press conference on April 6, Mr. Acheson declared that "The United States has firm international commitments, both for German disarmament and against German rearmament, and there is no change in this position." On April 22, Mr. McCloy reiterated that "we do not favor and do not contemplate the creation of a West German army."

At this point, however, a new outlet for discussion presented itself, and the promulgation by the Military Security Board of what was described as the "definitive law for the prevention of German rearmament" passed almost unnoticed amid the general preoccupation with the Schuman Plan. This plan, indeed, was primarily concerned with the problem of integrating Germany with the rest of Western Europe and attempting to prevent a resurgence of the German menace. Hence it must

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

be considered as having at least an indirect bearing on the question of German rearmament but lies somewhat outside the scope of the present discussion.

However, it was not long before the sequence of events in the Far East introduced a note of urgency into the general search for security, and the nations of Western Europe, shivering in the icy blasts of the Korean War, began anxiously to look around for warmer clothing. In the House of Commons on July 26, Mr. Churchill, unable to resist the fresh temptation to play his familiar role of the Cassandra of the twentieth century, referred again to the problem of German rearmament. "It is five months now since I raised the question," he said. "The Prime Minister called me irresponsible when I did so. . . . Perhaps it is better to be irresponsible and right, than to be responsible and wrong."

Shortly after this sally, Mr. Churchill attended the Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. In the course of this session he moved, and the Assembly passed, a resolution which deserves a fairly detailed examination.

THE STRASBOURG RESOLUTION AND THE SEARCH FOR SECURITY

The text of this resolution runs briefly as follows:

> The Assembly, in order to express its devotion to the maintenance of peace, and its resolve to sustain the action of the Security Council of the United Nations . . . calls for the immediate creation under the authority of a European Minister of Defense, of a European army, subject to proper unified democratic control and acting in full co-operation with the U.S.A. and Canada.
>
> [Passed, August 11, 1950: 89 to 5, with 27 abstentions.]

Several aspects of the proceedings leading up to this resolution and of those that followed it, as well as its actual wording and the general reactions to it, are most interesting. Not the least remarkable is perhaps the fact that, since it is expressly stated in Article 1, Paragraph 4 of the Statute of the Council that "questions pertaining to national defense are outside the competence of the Council," it is highly doubtful whether the Assembly had any business to discuss the subjects at all.

So far as the actual wording of the resolution is concerned, it

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

is worth noting that the phrase "under the authority of a European Minister of Defense" was inserted into the original draft of the text in order to meet the wishes of the former French foreign minister, Georges Bidault, one of the French representatives at the Assembly. The voting on the motion is also revealing. In the first place, owing to the large number of abstentions, the resolution barely gained the necessary two-thirds majority. These abstentions were composed of the representatives of Sweden and the Federal German Republic, who declined to vote on the ground that their countries were not members of the Atlantic Pact, and of a number of Labor representatives from the United Kingdom, the reasons for whose abstention were shortly to be made clear. The votes cast against the motion came from one British Labor member, and from four members from the republic of Eire, who, although their country was also not a member of the Atlantic Pact, nevertheless felt obliged by reason of Britain's role as an occupying power in the partition of Ireland to vote against the Churchill resolution.

The Assembly, however, having ventured so far into the forbidden territory of defense, proved reluctant to trespass any further. On August 16 two British representatives supported by members from Norway, Denmark, and Iceland expressed their objections to any renewed discussion on the subject as follows: "As responsible members of our Parliaments we cannot now vote for, or accept, plans which might conflict with plans already being carried out or already made. So far as we, as Members of the Atlantic Pact, are concerned, we must now leave this question to our governments and to the organs of the Atlantic Pact." In deference to such objections, the subject was, in fact, dropped, but not before there had appeared in the ranks of the partisans of Western defense a confusion that was soon to become worse confounded. Many clearly preferred to regard the existing North Atlantic Treaty Organization as providing the best prospects for an integrated defense of Europe, and to concentrate their efforts in this direction. On the other hand there were signs that, for whatever reason, others had higher hopes of some as yet unspecified machinery for defense that might one day be evolved around

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

the still insecure framework of the Council of Europe. The *London Times,* indeed, commenting on the resolution, pointed out "how early the Assembly can overlap work already being done elsewhere," and stated that "in the subsequent debate there was little to suggest that the N.A.T.O. is already striving to create a collective force broader and more powerful than the one which many hearers took Mr. Churchill to mean."

Mr. Churchill had devoted much of his speech to Germany: "I have heard it said," he stated, "that if any Germans, except Communists, were to be armed, this might be the pretext of a preventive war on the part of Russia; believe me, the long calculated designs of the Soviet government will not be timed or deflected by events of this order." He asked the Assembly to "assure our German friends that we shall hold their safety and freedom as sacred as our own." Although in the course of his speech he omitted to mention Germany as one of the nations who should contribute to the suggested European army, he later made it clear that he had intended to do so. In Washington at least there seemed to be no doubt of his meaning. Spokesmen were "encouraged" to see the idea of German rearmament originating in Europe, particularly under the patronage of "such a good European" as Mr. Churchill. Though reluctant to permit the rise of a German nationalist army, they had realized the impossibility of producing the necessary manpower without one; "but a German component of a European army would be an entirely different matter, and one which would receive general support in Washington."

The European idea, indeed, might seem to be making up for the setback that it had received over the Schuman Plan, and we shall presently see what inspiration the French government was to draw from the Assembly's resolution. Exactly what impetus this resolution did give to the speeding up of Western defense it is very difficult to assess, but it is not impossible that the ultimate judgment will be that, in other respects, it has done as much to confuse the cause of Europe as to promote it.

Meanwhile, Dr. Adenauer, his confidence regained, reentered the discussion. On August 17, after talks with the three

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

Allied High Commissioners on the security of Western Germany, with particular reference to a possible increase in the normal police forces of the Republic, he held a press conference at which he outlined the proposals he had made. These were seen to include not only the strengthening of the existing police but also the drafting of more Allied troops to Germany to form a screen behind which could be recruited a special force of German volunteers of the same size and strength as the "people's police" of the Eastern zone. This, Dr. Adenauer argued, would not constitute a measure of remilitarization. Official comment on these proposals was, however, reserved. An American spokesman confined himself to the statement that "the Western world is studying ways of strengthening the defense of democracy; as a part of Europe, Germany will obviously play a role." The only immediate result was that the Federal Republic was authorized to recruit an additional 10,000 men for the normal police forces.

In fact, Dr. Adenauer's suggestion might be considered a tall order. The "people's police," whose exact strength is unknown, may well soon number as many as 300,000 men; it has tanks and artillery, as well as embryo naval and air forces, and "can only be distinguished from any army proper by the fact that it draws its petrol from a public garage and gets its food supplies from the grocer and the butcher." Even if, as the Chancellor maintained, the idea of the re-establishment of a *Wehrmacht* was far from the thoughts of the Federal Government, the *Bundestag,* and the German people, and even if the uncomfortable word "remilitarization" could be avoided, permission could not lightly be granted to the Bonn government for the formation of an equivalent of the *Bereitschaften* in Western Germany.

Yet it seemed hard to deny Dr. Adenauer's contention that the present police force was utterly inadequate, even for the internal security of the German Republic. At the end of August he reiterated his anxiety in a memorandum presented to the High Commissioners, the purport of which seems to have been: first, that the Western powers must increase their forces in Western Germany; second, that some sort of protective police force was strongly desired by the Federal Govern-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

ment; and third, that the Republic would consider the question of a possible German contribution to a European army.

The Western powers, indeed, were faced with a serious dilemma. On the one hand, the possible menace that German arms might present in the future could not, in the light of past experience, be forgotten; and even though Germany's immediate might, like the menace, was strangely small, it still had to be guarded against by every means. But on the other hand, if adequate provision in terms of combatant units to hold aggression on the frontiers of Western Germany could not be made without some use of German manpower, the fact must be faced. Moreover, Dr. Adenauer seemed to lack conviction that the reaction of the Western powers would be prompt enough, even in the case of a crossing of the frontier by East German forces. In addition to the visible reassurance that some sort of West German force would provide for the Germans themselves, the occupying powers might find themselves in an awkward situation if they had to defend the frontiers of the Federal Republic without German assistance in a war of "liberation" launched by other Germans.

It seemed in fact as if a great deal were going to depend upon the results of the meetings, due to be held shortly in New York, of the three Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, and of the twelve Foreign Ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As yet, indeed, there was some reluctance on the part of official circles to state definitely that the question of Germany's part in the active defense of the West was to be discussed at these meetings; but it was clear that, since the main theme of these talks was to be the security of Western Europe, the problem was unlikely to be overlooked even if it could not immediately be answered.

Meanwhile, various Atlantic Pact governments began to announce their individual programs of rearmament. At the end of August, the British government indicated its intention to increase the period of compulsory military service to two years, and Belgium and France shortly afterwards also announced increases in the length of service. The French announcement is interesting, not only because it was seen that

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

the government had not felt sufficiently secure to introduce an increase from one year to two years, but had compromised by lengthening the period to eighteen months—and not only because no alteration had been made in the basic pay, of six francs per day, of the conscripts, but particularly on account of the wording of Premier Pleven's speech on this occasion. The French Premier, after emphasizing the need for the free peoples of Western Europe to build up a covering force, stated that any threat to the security of Western Germany would be a threat to the security of France as well. The existence of the "people's police," he went on, and the fact that Western Germany, whose political tendencies had been demonstrated in free elections, had no such force, would be taken into account in considering Dr. Adenauer's request for a stronger police force. And finally he made the significant statement that the Schuman Plan was an attempt to deal with the root causes of insecurity, and that kind of approach might be profitable as a means of preventing other sources of conflict.

In the United States also, the pace was quickening. President Truman, fresh from announcing that the strength of the United States armed forces was to be increased to three million men, held talks on the question of Germany's part in the scheme of defense with High Commissioner McCloy, who had come to Washington with the text of Dr. Adenauer's memorandum. After these talks, Mr. McCloy said that it had been agreed that "in some manner and some form the West Germans should be enabled, if they want to, to defend their own country." Both form and manner remained so far unspecified, but it was generally known that American opinion was strongly opposed to matching Russian dishonesty with a West German army disguised as a federal police force, which had in effect been the course suggested by the German chancellor. Nor did many appear inclined to accept either the view, expressed in an ingenious but unconvincing article in *Figaro,* that Europe could be defended without calling upon either American or German troops, or the declaration of Wilhelm Pieck, the East German president, that "war can be averted if mankind, including the German people, stand together for peace, and force the Anglo-Americans to leave Germany as

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

soon as possible." On September 10, in fact, President Truman announced that there were to be "substantial increases" in the strength of American forces in Western Europe; and the following day Mr. Acheson gained the approval of his Congressional committees for the proposals that he was to lay before the British and French Foreign Ministers at their meeting in New York on September 12.

The Acheson Proposals for German Rearmament

These proposals, although all discussion of them had taken place in closed session, had become something of an open secret, at least in their broad outline. The burden of them seems to have been that Western Germany should be included in the scheme of defense of the West, with French and British consent, through a combined European force of which the Germans would form a subordinate part—in other words, German troops should somehow be included in the integrated forces of NATO. The proposals were not detailed, but they appear to envisage the raising of small units at first and ultimately units up to divisional strength, while guarding against any possible revival of the German general staff. The United States, in fact, now expressed her conviction that in spite of the additional American commitments for the defense of Europe, and in spite of all that Britain and France had also undertaken to do, there was nevertheless no possibility of holding the frontiers of Western Germany against aggression without further assistance to be provided by the Germans themselves.

This was indeed a momentous decision, and not lightly to be taken. Clearly it is not yet possible to say with any certainty why it was made, but I believe it is possible to deduce motives that are inherently probable, if nothing more. In this connection, it is of the utmost importance to appreciate the relationship between governmental policy and military strategy. Policy is the dominant, strategy the subordinate, element; it is the province of policy to determine the ends, and the duty of strategy to supply the means. Policy, indeed, may well define an end that lies beyond the reach of the available means, and in such a case some compromise must be effected. Either the end must be modified, or the means must somehow be in-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

creased. But it is policy that decides whether the price that must be paid for this increase is a price that is justified by the importance of the end, or whether a less ambitious end should be defined.

In this case the end, which is the defense of Western Europe, is of paramount importance, not only to the countries of Western Europe themselves, but also, for economic as well as for political reasons, to the United States; and it is not an end that will admit of modification. Even though, from a purely military point of view, it might be preferable that Western Europe should be defended on the Rhine, to adopt such a course would be to deliver the Federal Republic and the industrial resources of Western Germany as an easy prize to any aggressor from the East. If nothing else, it is of the greatest importance to the Western Allies that they should be able to deny these industrial resources to Russia, even if they cannot make full use of them themselves.

But if the Americans had decided that the defense of Europe was to be the end, they had also decided that the existing means were inadequate. This deficiency could only be made good in one of two ways: either the Allied powers must make still greater increases in their own programs of rearmament, or some acceptable way must be found whereby the Germans themselves could be armed. Military necessity demanded a choice between these two alternatives, but only policy could make that choice. The choice that Mr. Acheson went to New York to advocate must be taken as evidence that, in the eyes of the United States government, the disadvantages of increasing the rearmament commitments of the Allied powers outweighed the disadvantages of rearming Germany. Indeed, it is possible to find some advantages of a positive nature in the latter course. It can for instance be argued that to arm German units would give the Germans a stake in their own defense and would bolster up morale; but it can hardly be maintained that these rather problematical benefits would of themselves be sufficient to justify the choice. The real question was which of the two evils was the lesser.

Mr. Acheson, however, was at first to find some difficulty in persuading his French and British colleagues to agree, not only

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

that his proposals provided a suitable means of implementing the American choice of German rearmament, but even that it was necessary to make such a choice at all. For even if Mr. Bevin and M. Schuman had come to New York prepared to find the subject of German rearmament on the agenda of their meeting, it is unlikely that they had expected to find it presented in such a concrete form. In fact, shortly before the meeting, M. Schuman had expressed his belief that although the internal security of Germany was the responsibility of the Germans, external security was the responsibility of the Allies. Moreover, owing to the altered circumstances, the Allies themselves were not adequately equipped, he said, and their needs must inevitably take priority before there could be any question of arming the Germans as well.

At any event, the Foreign Ministers' meeting was adjourned after three days, in order to enable the British and French representatives to consult their governments and the High Commissioners. Although the meeting of the NATO Foreign Ministers began immediately afterwards, it was clear that no decision could be reached at this meeting until the three Great Powers were also in agreement. Indeed, there were signs of uncertainty in the ranks of the "Little Nine" also, although Lester Pearson, the Canadian Secretary for External Affairs, stated categorically that "the time has come to rearm the West Germans because the East Germans are already armed." So the Atlantic Pact council was also adjourned for governmental consultations, and the interim communiqué, while welcoming the formation of "an integrated military force, adequate for the defense of Europe," made no mention of the subject of German rearmament.

On September 18 the three Foreign Ministers resumed their meeting, which ended the same day, when the following statement was issued:

> In the spirit of the new relationship which they wish to establish with the Federal Republic, the three Governments have decided . . . to take the necessary steps . . . to terminate the state of war with Germany as soon as possible. . . . To make the protection of the free world, including the German Republic, more effective, the Allied Governments will increase their forces in Germany. They will treat any attack against the Federal Republic or Berlin, from any quarter, as an attack upon themselves. The

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

> Ministers are fully agreed that the re-creation of a German national army would not serve the best interests of Germany or Europe; they also believe that this is the view of the great majority of the German people. The Ministers have however taken note of sentiments recently expressed in Germany and elsewhere in favor of German participation in the common defense of European freedom. The questions raised by the problems of such participation are at present the subject of study and exchange of views.

Inconclusive as this statement is on the subject of German rearmament, it is too much to say that nothing had been achieved. In fact, agreement had been reached in so far as the policy itself was concerned, but no agreement had been reached for the provision of the necessary means. The key to this lay in the French attitude, for it seems clear that the British government had substantially accepted the American point of view. The French had indeed their reasons for fearing a revival of the German menace, and they could with justice maintain that there did not yet exist any integrated force into which the Germans could be fitted. However, the formation of such a force had been under discussion since May, under the auspices of the Atlantic Pact, and it had looked as if an agreement were about to be concluded. To American and British eyes at least, it appeared as if a tightly knit Atlantic alliance should be strong enough to control and direct the form of any German contribution to defense. It was natural that they should consider the Strasbourg resolution as an invitation to proceed with German rearmament along the lines of the Atlantic Pact. It was no less natural that the United States should press for an immediate decision, in order that German units might be fitted into the integrated force from the moment of its inception.

The French, however, if they had accepted the ultimate necessity of some form of German rearmament, did not yet seem to believe that it was a matter of immediate urgency; nor were they convinced that an organization within the framework of the Atlantic Pact, such as had been envisaged in Mr. Acheson's proposals, would provide the best answer to the problem. An article which appeared after the New York meetings in the paper *Le Petit Bleu du Côte du Nord,* of which M. Pleven is the political director, remarked that "the prob-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

lem whether Germany's contribution can at this stage take the form of military units within a Western force cannot hastily be resolved." The article went on to suggest an approach to Russia to find out her real intentions concerning rearmament, a suggestion which indicated the French government's desire to carry the greatest possible weight of popular opinion with it.

The French government, indeed, now found itself in a most awkward situation, and so far there seemed to be no way out. However, it remained adamant in its objections to the Acheson proposals, and further conferences in New York were unable to make much headway. On September 24, the meeting between the Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers of the three powers ended with another guarded statement. But the result can be gauged from a comment made by Jules Moch, the French Minister of Defense. Concerning Mr. Bevin's statement that "advances have been made on the general problem of building up the forces of the West," M. Moch said: "It is possible that from the standpoint of Britain some advances have been made." Similarly, the adjourned meeting of the Atlantic Pact Foreign Ministers ended in a communiqué to the effect that "the council was in agreement that Germany should be enabled to contribute to the build-up of the defense of Western Europe, and, noting that the occupying powers were studying the matter, requested the Defense Committee to make recommendations at the earliest possible date as to methods by which Germany could most usefully make its contribution."

The result of the New York conferences was, in fact, a deadlock. But if the primary point at issue between the United States and Britain on the one hand and France on the other was the vexed question of the German contribution to the integrated defense of Europe, this deadlock had the doubly unfortunate effect of preventing the implementation of any integrated scheme of defense as well, since the United States seemed determined to hold out for a decision on the German question first. The question, once raised, could not be shelved, for it was obvious that neither the United States nor the countries of Europe were likely to give their wholehearted

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

support to a scheme which would, by implication, be inadequate unless it included a German contribution. It was common knowledge that it was the French attitude that was responsible for the delay, and the position of the French government was highly embarrassing. Public opinion in France, for reasons that were emotional as much as political, was deeply suspicious of the idea of German rearmament, and there was moreover a general election in the offing. But if the coalition government did not feel that it could safely accept the Acheson proposals, for reasons of internal and of external policy, there was nevertheless a grave danger that prolonged disagreement might bring about a serious division in the ranks of the Western Allies. Already, at home and abroad, French intransigence was being criticized, and there can be little doubt that the Prague proposals for a German settlement, issued on October 21 after the meeting between Mr. Molotov and the Foreign Ministers of eight satellite states, were designed to take advantage of this rift. In an effort to recover the initiative, the French Council of Ministers approved, on October 23, the text of an alternative proposal for German rearmament which was announced in the National Assembly the following day by M. Pleven, and which is generally known as the Pleven Plan.

The Pleven Plan

The substance of the Pleven Plan may be outlined briefly as follows. It envisages the creation of a European army under the direction of a European Minister of Defense, who would be nominated by the governments concerned and be responsible to a European assembly. This assembly could be either the Strasbourg Assembly or an emanation of it, or an assembly of specially elected representatives. The Minister would have the same tasks as a national minister of defense, but on the larger scale implied by a European union, and he would carry out the directives of a defense council made up of ministers from the participating countries. The contingents to be furnished by the member countries, including Germany, "would be incorporated in the European army on the level of the smallest possible unit," and the financing of this army would be carried out through a common budget.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

In his speech, M. Pleven said that the plan was designed to enable Germany to furnish her contribution to putting Western Europe in a state of defense. He stressed the danger of the constitution of German divisions and a German War Ministry as tending sooner or later to the reconstitution of a national army and to the revival of German militarism. He further emphasized the need for a transitory period and insisted that the creation of a unified army should in no way hold up the execution of programs either laid down or actually being carried out by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But, he said, as soon as the Schuman Plan had been signed, the French government would invite Great Britain and the free countries of continental Europe who might agree, to study the matter in Paris on the basis of the French proposals. Before the ballot on the motion, he assured the Assembly that the other Atlantic Pact states would have to accept this basic principle for a European army, or France would maintain her opposition to giving arms to the Bonn government. It is interesting to note in passing that whereas the motion "approving the Government's statement" was passed by 349 votes to 235, the motion approving its determination "not to allow the revival of the German army and general staff" was passed by 402 votes to 168.

Whatever else may be the result of the Pleven Plan, it had made clear the fundamental difference of approach to the problem of Western defense between the nations of the Continent on the one hand, and those outside it, a category that seems at present to number the United Kingdom among its members, on the other hand. In the preamble to the Pleven Plan it is expressly stated that this suggestion "has been directly inspired by the resolution of the Council of Europe of August 11, 1950." But the French interpretation of the Strasbourg resolution clearly differs widely from the American. Those outside the Continent believe that the most certain means of averting aggression is to achieve the greatest possible increase in strength in the shortest possible time, and they are not immediately concerned with the problem of what may happen once this aim has been achieved. The Continental, living in the shadow of European history, inevitably thinks of the situ-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

ation with which Europe will be faced when the bond created by the Eastern menace has been loosened by the success of the measures adopted to avert it.

Seen in this light, as an insistence on the need for a long-term as well as a short-term policy, the Pleven Plan obviously should not be disregarded. What value it possesses as a contribution to the immediate needs of Europe is another question. The reception which it received in the United States and in Britain was far from encouraging. In London, the *Times* pointed out that it was not "in any sense a practical contribution to the immediate discussion," and emphasized that this military version of the Schuman Plan raised again all the difficulties of the federalist solution that had been encountered at Strasbourg, apart from its defect of being "a long-term answer to a short-term problem." In New York, the *Herald Tribune* said that the French had "come up with an answer to the problem of German rearmament which must baffle their best friends," and added that "the plain fact is . . . that if the French conditions were to prevail German arms would not be incorporated in the Western defense system in time to be of much use." On both the military and on the political side, the scheme was felt in many quarters to contain serious flaws. Not the least of these was the fact that the proposal for the creation of a European Minister of Defense, carried to its logical conclusion, meant the establishment of a European State, if the post was to have any reality. And if this was the case, it was clear, not only that such a Federal State could not be brought into being in one year, or even in two years, but also that there was a strong possibility that such a federation, if eventually realized, was unlikely to include Great Britain and several other European countries among its members. In this event, the divergent approaches to the problems of Western defense, and the duplication of organizations, would inevitably be perpetuated.

But whatever the technical objections that may be raised against the Pleven Plan, it must nevertheless be considered as a notable, if idealistic, attempt to solve a fundamental problem. It is not fair to dismiss it as being simply an expedient introduced in an effort to gain time, or to accuse the French gov-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

ernment of insincerity, for there were signs that French policy had been feeling its way towards a proposal of this sort for some time. But the great weakness of the Pleven Plan, at least in American and in British eyes, was that it raised questions which only time could answer. Although M. Pleven declared that the creation of a unified army on the lines he suggested should not hold up work already in progress under the Atlantic Pact, it is hard to believe that he did not foresee that only further delay could be the result of his proposals, particularly in view of the inflexible way in which discussions on the subject had been handled by M. Moch. While delay may at times be useful as providing leisure for reflection and may prevent the hasty adoption of a course that would later be regretted, there were in this case several reasons why it might prove dangerous, if not fatal.

Most obvious of these was the fact that the more time was spent in discussion, the longer Europe would have to remain in a state of inadequate defense. There was a real danger that any prolonged failure to arrive at a decision would have an adverse effect on the forces of public opinion, both in America and in Germany. What the effect in Germany might be, I hope presently to show, but in the United States there were already signs that patience would not last forever. Some of Mr. Acheson's advisers were said to have been in favor of bringing pressure to bear on France by threatening to withhold American financial aid. On the other hand there was always a possibility that American opinion, disgusted at the continuation of the deadlock, might begin to feel inclined to leave the Europeans to their own devices.

In fact, the immediate result of the enunciation of the Pleven Plan was to introduce an air of unreality into the meeting of the Defense Committee of the Atlantic Pact, which opened in Washington on October 27. Although M. Moch pressed for the adoption of his government's proposals, he emphasized that only their details could be modified, while the principles could not be altered. The committee, having no authority to discuss the political questions involved, clearly could not come to any decisions of importance. Emanuel Shinwell, the British Defense Minister, had announced on his ar-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

rival in the United States: "It is time we got down to business—the longer we delay the worse it will be for every one of us." After the conference was over, he was forced to admit that "we made some progress . . . but not enough to satisfy me." There were signs that a compromise had been worked out on a point of detail, the size of the units that Germany should contribute to whatever scheme might eventually be adopted; but M. Schuman's speech in the November session of the Council of Europe seemed to indicate that any compromise on matters of principle was far from being reached.

In this speech, delivered on November 24, M. Schuman said that the French proposals were not intended as a dilatory maneuver or as an involved subterfuge. Military problems in Europe had arisen sooner than France would have wished, for she would have liked to build up first the economic and political bases before tackling the military structure. "We want a defense organization on a European basis," he went on, "because we see no other possible solution to the German problem." In the French plan, there was to be no national army or armament; Europe as a whole would be armed, not individual European states. Replying to those who said that a European organization was unnecessary and that Germany could be integrated in an Atlantic Pact force, M. Schuman maintained that this only involved the institution of a unified command while allowing the survival of national armies. "The Atlantic Pact," he said, "has a temporary aim. The European army in our view is a permanent solution, and must insure peace against all threats, internal or external, now and in the future."

What would be the wider repercussions of this speech, and of the resolution calling for German participation in Western defense within the framework of a united European force which was passed by the Assembly later in the same session, it was too early yet to say. In the light of subsequent ministerial statements in the House of Commons, however, it must be taken as certain that the British government for one would not accept its implications. Yet if the proposals for a degree of German rearmament within the organization of the Atlantic Pact did not, in spite of all that had been said, provide adequate safeguards against the possible resurrection of a German

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

national army, as M. Schuman contended, this was clearly a serious deficiency, and one that must somehow be remedied if these proposals were to be implemented. At the moment the only way to a solution satisfactory to the Western Allies seemed to lie through a compromise whereby France could agree to accept the signature of the Schuman Plan as a sufficient guarantee against a revival of the German menace, and so could allow the resumption of a progress along the lines of the Atlantic Pact.

The Attitude of the Germans

Unfortunately, even if the Western Allies should succeed in reconciling their private differences and in evolving a satisfactory compromise, there would still remain one final problem to be settled. It was becoming clear that this problem, of persuading the Germans themselves to accept whatever form of rearmament the Allies might agree upon, was likely to prove no easier to resolve than the other problems which German rearmament had raised. It was not until this stage in the discussions among the Western powers that any serious consideration appears to have been given to the position of the West Germans. There existed and still exists in Germany a considerable body of opinion which acknowledged, or perhaps even welcomed, the necessity for a German contribution to Western defense, but it was evident that there were also powerful forces that were opposed to the idea, forces that were both moral and political in their origins.

Although these forces are naturally closely interconnected, for the purposes of the present analysis it seems best to attempt to consider them separately for the sake of clarity. To take first the opposition to German rearmament that was based on consideration of policy, it appears that this also had a double character. On the one hand, there were what may be called the negative objections. Chief of these was the fear of a possible resurgence of the militaristic element, which is probably dreaded as much by the Germans as it is by the French. There was also the well-founded fear that in the event of aggression from the East and a resultant war, Germany would become the battleground of Europe. However, these

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

objections were capable of being overcome once a satisfactory and sufficient scheme of Western defense was seen to be in prospect. What were more serious were the positive objections, the nature of which can best be illustrated by quoting some extracts from a statement made, on August 23, by Kurt Schumacher, the chairman of the Social Democratic Party.

Commenting on Dr. Adenauer's suggestion, after the passing of the Strasbourg resolution, that Germany should make some contribution to her own defense, Dr. Schumacher said:

> I can see no political foundation for this unsolicited offer. We are throwing away the last trump out of our hand which we need in order to achieve certain things—for example decisive alterations in the Occupation Statute, and in the Ruhr Statute, and certain adjustments with regard to the security authorities. . . . Democracy should defend Germany on the offensive in the East. . . . The plans for a direct military or indirect police rearmament of Germany have a purely defensive character. The supposition is that a great deal will be given up, above all that Berlin will be given up. German Social Democracy cannot agree to such a policy. Democracy's counter-thrust must seek and achieve a decision on the Niemen or the Vistula. Nothing else will serve as a successful defense, only as the certain destruction of Germany. The Social Democrats' point of view is the way of getting the necessary pressure to bear on the United States and other democratic powers and to take from them every possibility of evasion or excuse.

This statement, incidentally, is described in the official introduction as being of "fundamental significance for future policy."

But whatever the full implications of this speech, it does, I think, indicate that there was in Germany a widespread reluctance to accept rearmament, based on fears that to do so would involve accepting the permanence of the Oder-Neisse line, and also perhaps a final division of the country between East and West. Not only this, but there was also a strong feeling that if rearmament was to be accepted, it could be only on terms laid down by the Germans themselves. This danger had been pointed out by the author of a commentary in the *New Statesman,* who added, "The more the Western Allies emphasise their military weakness, the harsher will be Germany's conditions for consenting to be rearmed." This attitude, which could also be detected in some of Dr. Adenauer's statements

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

on the subject, might have a certain amount of justice on its side, but it was evident that nothing but harm could result if German politicians were tempted to resort to what could only be called political blackmail.

What was probably the most fundamental difficulty that would have to be overcome was the "moral disarmament" of modern Germany. The harsh consequences of two military defeats had undoubtedly left a great many Germans in a pacifist and defeatist mood. Since 1945 the policy of the occupying powers had been to discourage them from ever again putting their faith in arms. Evidence of this state of mind is abundant, and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* brought out well the irony of the Strasbourg resolution. "A German," it commented, "who, five years ago, did not give up his rusty cavalry sword, but buried it in his garden, was reckoned a Nazi and an enemy of democracy. A German who today says he has no liking for carrying a rifle, and that he will put on a steel helmet with distaste, is again regarded as a bad democrat." The views of Pastor Martin Niemöller, who would compound with Communism in order to save the unity of the Evangelical Church, were no doubt extreme and unrepresentative. However sentiments such as those voiced by Professor Schmid, the third leader of the S.D.P., that he would rather be "Bolshevized as an entire being in an entire house than as a cripple in a trench" could not be dismissed entirely. And the Communists, who fondly wish to see the Ruhr become the arsenal of the "People's Democracies," were finding useful allies in the lethargy and fatalism of many Germans. This "moral disarmament" was not indeed confined to Germany, but it was in Germany that it presented the most serious obstacle to the solidarity of Western defense.

All these forces had certainly made their presence felt in the results of the various German elections of late 1950. However in trying to assess how far the swing away from the Christian Democratic Union represented a vote against rearmament, there are two other factors that must be taken into account. The first is that not only had local issues played a large part in these elections, but the economic policies of the Federal Government had also been the cause of some discon-

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

tent. Hence the loss of ground by the government parties cannot be regarded as having been brought about by the rearmament question alone. The second factor is the peculiar advantage that was enjoyed by S.D.P. in the prevailing conditions of uncertainty. Although Dr. Schumacher campaigned, not against rearmament, but against rearmament before the people had been consulted in a general election, it seems to be the case that his party, as a result of his associations with Pastor Niemöller and the speeches of Professor Schmid, had come to be regarded as the party of "no more soldiering." And whereas the government parties suffered from the handicap that no concrete military proposals had yet been placed before them, the opposition were able to talk in general terms and could develop the ever popular theme that the Germans were being exploited or imposed upon.

The election results could not therefore be considered as a reliable indication of the strength of German opposition to rearmament any more than could the various unofficial polls and surveys of public opinion that had been conducted. There was evidently a feeling, based both on idealism and self-interest, in favor of taking some responsibility for the defense of the West, and few political leaders seemed to disagree with Dr. Adenauer that if the Atlantic community needed the Germans, the Germans also needed the Atlantic community. Yet it was clear that the Germans were far from being ready to take up their arms again. Before this end could be achieved, the consent, not only of the Allies, not only of the Bonn government, but of the German people themselves, would have to be obtained. Obviously this would require more time and perhaps more tact than had originally been thought necessary. But meanwhile not only had the allies failed to come to a decision among themselves, so that all progress towards a real integration of Western defense remained obstructed, but this failure was also increasing German anxiety and the political uncertainty that went with it. The hesitations of the Germans about rearmament, reflected in the difficulties encountered in reaching agreement on a revised Occupation Statute, tended to grow with the delay on the part of the Western powers in making known their intentions about defense.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

The Appointment of a Supreme Commander

Clearly the time had come when if the lost momentum was to be regained, some sort of compromise must be effected. The *Times* commenting on M. Pleven's visit to London early in December, forecast something of the kind. "The French government," it said, "is likely to agree that rearmament in Western Europe, therefore involving Germany in some degree, must proceed without further loss of time, while their Allies will agree that French consent does not prejudice the chances of working out a form of European defense organization which will meet their security requirements and further the military integration of Europe."

The first steps towards this necessary compromise, upon which so much appeared to turn, were made when the Atlantic Council deputies met under the chairmanship of Charles M. Spofford during the first week of December. It adopted a plan which was immediately approved by the French council of ministers, "providing for a transitional solution, pending the conclusion of negotiations on the creation of a European army." This, on the face of it, might seem as if the French government had in all but name abandoned their previous position. As *Le Monde* pointed out, "It is not only in France that temporary solutions become permanent." It was feared by some that the French concession would bring about exactly what the French had been at such pains to avoid—the creation of a German army before the framework of a European army could come into being. The United States had made it clear that the nomination of a Supreme Commander depended on the solution of the German rearmament issue, which had been held up by French objections. These had now, apparently, been overcome, and even though France was still determined to press on with her plan for a European army, which had American support, this was an idea which was known to raise grave doubts in the minds of several continental countries.

But there were at the same time signs that the French "concessions" were not in fact so far-reaching as they might seem. This became clear after the Brussels conference of the North Atlantic Council and Defense Ministers. In the statement

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

issued after the joint session of December 19, it was announced that "the Council also reached unanimous agreement regarding the part which Germany might assume in the common defense," and "invited the governments of France, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. to explore this matter with the government of the Federal German Republic."

But the chief achievement of the Brussels conference, and the one which caused the most widespread satisfaction, was the appointment of General Eisenhower as Commander-in-Chief of NATO forces. This appointment can hardly be said to have come as a surprise, but was none the less welcome, signifying as it did to many Europeans a further commitment by the United States to Western Europe.

This change of emphasis caused particular satisfaction in France. The agreement on the appointment of a Supreme Commander before the rearmament of Germany was embarked upon was felt to underline the priority of strengthening existing Western forces which had long been pressed for in Paris. That the emphasis at Brussels had been laid on the creation of an Atlantic force, while the question of German rearmament might almost be said to have figured as a minor issue, helped to allay the French fear of taking any steps which might be interpreted by Russia as a *fait accompli* prejudicial to any fruitful discussion at a four-power conference. For, on the French side at least, the course of events must be considered to some extent in the light of two separate, but closely related, Russian notes. The first, delivered on November 3, called for a four-power conference on the German question, and the second, of December 15, accused France and Britain of violating by their agreement to German participation in the Western defense plan the Potsdam agreement of 1945 on German demilitarization and the Anglo-Soviet and Franco-Soviet treaties of friendship of 1942 and 1944.

It should not, however, be imagined that these Russian notes were the only, or even the chief, reason for the evidently altered approach to the question of German rearmament on the part of the Western powers. For, even though the French government has naturally proved rather more sensitive to the strictures of Moscow than has the American or British, yet

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

the Brussels declaration did in itself provide clear evidence that the Allies were not to be frightened into giving up the substance for the shadow. As the *Times* commented, "the one abiding condition of making the attempt to talk with Russia is that the work of increasing the defensive strength of the Western powers, upon which the chance of a settlement that will be kept altogether depends, should go unslackened." The Western reply, published on December 22, to the original Soviet note proposing the basis of a four-power conference, confirmed the Allied position.

> The only German military force which exists at present is that which has been for many months established in the Soviet zone, and which is trained on military lines with artillery and tanks. If the participation of German units in the defense of Western Germany is being discussed, it is solely because Soviet policy and actions have compelled the other nations to examine all means of improving their security. . . . The serious tension which exists today springs neither from the question of the demilitarization of Germany, nor from the German problem as a whole. It arises primarily from the general attitude adopted by the Government of the U.S.S.R. since the end of the war, and from the consequent international developments of recent months.

It cannot therefore fairly be maintained that the conference at Brussels has resulted in a weakening of Allied determination, or even in the "victory for French wisdom and caution" that was hailed by the left-wing *Franc-Tireur*. What the Brussels statement amounted to in fact was an admission that the question, as originally posed, had been wrongly framed. The problem was not, and had never been, how best the supposedly willing Germans might be allowed to rearm, but rather, how best a reluctant Germany could be persuaded to accept her rightful position in the mutual defense system of the Western world. There can be little doubt that this admission chiefly represents an adjustment in the American approach to the problem. The United States, it was clear, had now realized that the necessary negotiations with the Bonn government were likely to be long and delicate, and that the consent of Germany to her own rearmament was not rapidly to be obtained. In the circumstances, there was nothing to be gained, and much to be lost, by allowing the German problem further to obstruct the closer integration of the NATO defenses, but it was in a

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

sense accidental that American second thoughts corresponded in this respect so closely with French wishes.

The nature of these second thoughts was concisely expressed by General Eisenhower himself, in an interview shortly after his new appointment had been announced. The Germans, he said, had "a very special and difficult problem to decide. We should not be too sure we know the answers for them before they learn the answers themselves." And although, upon reflection, it might seem curious that the new Supreme Commander had so thoroughly appreciated this all-important aspect of the problem which had, during the previous three months, eluded so many of those concerned, it was evident that his words represented the official policy of the Western powers and of NATO. Whether this changed policy can fairly be described as a compromise is debatable. It seems rather to have been the outcome of a sounder understanding of the facts of the case. But at least it could be hoped that the integration of Western defense would again move forward upon its interrupted course. It remained now to be seen what steps the Atlantic powers would take to prove to Russia that Stalin's words to Churchill in 1942 held equally true for 1951: "Now that you have appointed a Supreme Commander, I know that you mean business."

The Supreme Commander in Europe

The news of the appointment of General Eisenhower and the prospect now that some agreement had finally been achieved, of giving substance to the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE), provided a much needed impetus to the Western defense plans. Already, on December 20, it had been announced, by the consultative council of the Brussels Treaty organization, that the military features of Western Union were to be merged with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization under the new Supreme Commander. And although this decision did not mean that the military obligations of the Brussels treaty, which had always been more immediately compelling than those of the Atlantic treaty, were to be superseded, this and subsequent announcements testified to the determination of the Atlantic Allies to put an end to

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

existing duplications and ambiguities in the field of their defensive plans.

Of still greater significance perhaps was the tour of the Atlantic treaty countries undertaken by General Eisenhower in the course of January. This tour, which took him through France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, Portugal and Italy to Western Germany and back to the United States via Luxembourg and Canada, was naturally more of a brief preliminary survey than an exhaustive investigation. But it was made the occasion for the announcement of further significant defense increases on the part of most of the nations concerned. How nearly the strength of fifty or more divisions, and 5,000 or 6,000 aircraft that had been estimated necessary, was likely to be achieved, it was still too soon to say with any certainty. On February 1, if General Eisenhower was not able to present to Congress a detailed inventory of his discoveries in Europe, he had at least seen enough to enable him to make a general profession of faith in the worthiness of the cause. This profession, coupled with the news of the improved situation in Korea, banished the thesis that "Western Europe must create and equip huge numbers of fighting divisions of its own before we land another man or another dollar on their shores" from the anterooms of policy to the attics of history.

But although the effect of these developments in the broader sphere of NATO had been temporarily to relegate the question of German rearmament to second place, it was clear that Germany was far from being forgotten. On the contrary, as Mr. McCloy stated at a press conference on December 27, the instructions of the High Commission were to go ahead with defense negotiations with the Bonn government as a matter of urgency. The Germans, he added, "should not now reckon how little they can contribute, but how much." It had already been announced on December 22 that a board of experts had been formed to discuss the "scale and manner" of a possible German contribution to Western defense. This was to consist on the German side of three principal members, Herr Theodor Blank, a Christian Democrat member of the *Bundestag,* Herr Speidel, a former general and once Rommel's chief

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

of staff, and Herr von Heusinger, another former general who had been director of operations to the German High Command. The Allied representatives were apparently to be the members of the Military Security Board. In Germany, the news of the impending talks was received with satisfaction, although it was felt that they were likely to be prolonged. Some cynics were led to comment that it was a far cry from the days when demilitarization ordinances forbade the making of toy soldiers and tanks; but there was a general welcome for this opportunity to state the German case, which had been neglected hitherto.

These discussions, which were described as being "informal talks at a technical level," were begun on January 9 and continued at intervals throughout January and February. Nevertheless it was clear that the question of German rearmament remained a political and psychological rather than a purely military issue, for physical factors would in any case probably limit the size of the German contingents for some time. Indeed, the British High Commissioner, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, still felt it necessary, on January 12, to warn the Germans against "a policy of adventure, of playing off one power against another," which "might seem attractive on a short-term view, but would be disastrous in the end." He lamented the fact that "the most popular speeches in the *Bundestag,* and in many *Landtage,* are those which, ignoring Germany's dangerous position, and without protest from any quarter, hurl reckless defiance at those countries on whom Germany's safety and prosperity are most dependent."

The defense plans of the Allied powers, even before their negotiations with Germany began had already depended upon German assistance. Evidently what was now needed was some means whereby the Allies, without slackening their determination, might regain the initiative, and this General Eisenhower set himself to bring about. In the course of his visit to Western Germany, the Supreme Commander on January 20 attended a reception given by the American High Commissioner, at which he had an opportunity to meet members of the German defense committee. His appointment to the leadership of NATO forces had originally been received less enthusiastically

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

in Germany than elsewhere, but the general now did much to remedy this. In a speech on the same day, General Eisenhower expressed his hope that the Germans would one day be lined up with the rest of the free world, and "on exactly the same status as all other nations." He would not, he said, "be prepared to command an organization in which sizable contingents had been included by force, or with any disgusted feeling." Two days later, speaking to a meeting of German party leaders at Bad Homburg, he went a stage further. "I have come to know," he said, "that there is a real difference between the regular German soldier and officer, and Hitler and his criminal group. For my part I do not believe that the German soldier as such has lost his honor." This last speech, although considered in some quarters to be rather a studied compliment, was greeted in Germany as "an enormous psychological step forward," and was considered to meet the long felt want for a "rehabilitation of the German soldier." Although the same thing had been said before by other Allied leaders, it did now help to wipe out the impression in many German minds that General Eisenhower had been too antipathetic to the Germans and had regarded the German soldier as the representative of mass murder. Yet much more than this would be necessary before any impressive majority in the *Bundestag* could be obtained in favor of the Federal Republic's making its contribution to Western defense.

This clearly was realized by General Eisenhower, and in his report to Congress he restated his position. While refusing to enter into a detailed discussion of the conversations he had held while in Germany, the Supreme Commander said:

> I personally think that there has to be a political platform achieved, an understanding that will contemplate an eventual and an earned equality on the part of that nation, before we should start to talk about including units of Germans in any kind of army. Certainly I for one want no unwilling contingents, no soldier serving in the pattern of the Hessians, in any army of my command.

The implications of this report were not likely to be lost, either in America or in Germany. In Frankfurt, the British High Commissioner had already explained the new approach, and expressed his agreement with General Eisenhower's belief

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

that the Atlantic army should first be brought into shape and that German participation was a secondary issue. Sir Ivone refused to admit that there might be a "line of exasperation" arising out of the slow fulfilment of the negotiations. He said there must be no undue impatience, but if the Allies conformed steadily to the goal of equality, relations would develop healthily during the next twelve months, even though absolute equality, in view of the complex industrial, political and economic issues that it raised, might not be achieved within that time.

In Germany again, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* commenting on the speech of February 1, wrote:

> By his visit to the Federal Republic, General Eisenhower has learned what many Western statesmen have not yet grasped, that the German soldier will only be a good soldier again when the semi-colonial status has been removed from his people. If General Eisenhower helps to spread this knowledge, his visit to Europe has justified itself.

But perhaps the most important result was the effect of the Supreme Commander's words in America itself. As the London *Times* commented on February 5:

> Even before he left on his mission he had made it plain that he thought the handling of this problem had been unfortunate. The trouble may have begun in the administration's heavy handed approach last September, but since then it has become a dogma on Capitol Hill that the Germans were longing to provide the core of the Atlantic army and were only being stopped by French—and to a lesser extent British—intransigence. Eisenhower made it clear that he wanted no unwilling contingents, that at the moment the Germans were unwilling, and that it was a mistake to manoeuvre them into a "trading position." It is probable that no more will be heard of German participation until General Eisenhower thinks they are ready to participate.

General Eisenhower had in fact come to the conclusion that the risks of pressing on at the former pace in an attempt to produce a German army at once were too great to be justified. It was better, he felt, to go ahead with the Atlantic defense force without the Germans, temporarily at least, even if this should mean that this defense force would meanwhile lack one-fifth of its eventual strength. This decision had been taken, not for any fear of Russian reprisals, but simply because it

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

had become obvious that the Germans would not willingly cooperate without themselves enjoying a position of greater equality within the Western world, or before the military strength of the Atlantic community in Europe had become really substantial. Both these conditions had been expressed by Dr. Adenauer in the course of his five-point statement on rearmament made at a party meeting at Bielefeld on January 14, and indeed the apparent half-heartedness of some Atlantic treaty countries had provided many Germans with an excuse for a new variation on the theme of *"ohne mich."* The Germans were no more interested than any other continental country in raising an army to serve as a defeated rearguard for a future Dunkirk.

Conclusion

Indeed, it had now generally to be accepted that only time and patience could make useful and willing soldiers of the Germans. In the way in which the problem had hitherto been handled there was perhaps much to regret. At the outset, by framing plans with a gap that would be filled only by a German contribution, the Atlantic Council had given the Germans a strong bargaining position, which would no doubt have been exploited in Bonn even if the Germans as a whole had been readier than they were to accept the immediate risks of rearming. Moreover, inter-Allied disagreements on the problem had brought about unfortunate delays in the integration of Western defense as a whole. But with the appointment of General Eisenhower, the proper perspective seemed to have been regained. At one stage there had seemed to be a real danger that the Germans might be forced to rearm against their will. This danger was now, happily, averted. It only remained to hope that the new approach would prove more successful than the old—and to reflect how far the situation, or men's reading of it, had changed since Mr. Byrnes had said in his speech at Stuttgart in 1946:

> In agreeing at Potsdam that Germany should be disarmed and demilitarized and in proposing that the four major powers should by treaty jointly undertake to see that Germany is kept disarmed and demilitarized for a generation, the United States was not unmindful of the

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892

responsibility resting upon it and its major Allies to maintain and enforce peace under the law.

Freedom from militarism will give the German people the opportunity, if they will but seize it, to apply their great energies and abilities to the works of peace. It will give them the opportunity to show themselves worthy of the respect and friendship of peace-loving nations, and in time, to take an honorable place among the members of the United Nations.

It is not in the interest of the German people or in the interest of world peace that Germany should become a pawn or a partner in a military struggle for power between the East and the West.[1]

[1] As quoted in Raymond Dennett and Robert K. Turner (eds.), *Documents on American Foreign Relations,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1948, VIII, 211.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. University of Basel Library, on 11 Jul 2017 at 10:29:32, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008892